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**NEWS From:**

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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**FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA**

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## **Honda, Homeland Security Task Force Introduce \$7 Billion Bioterrorism Legislation**

*Silicon Valley Legislator Pushes Tech-Driven Proposal to Bolster Efforts on State, Local Level*

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose), Vice Chairman of the Domestic Law Enforcement Working Group of the House Democratic Task Force on Homeland Security, today joined Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) in introducing the Bioterrorism Protection Act (BioPACT) of 2001, a \$7 billion proposal to protect communities throughout America against bioterrorist threats or attacks. A number of technology-driven proposals offered by Honda have been included in the bill, which seeks to equip our communities to prevent and respond to bioterrorism by strengthening our intelligence and law enforcement capabilities, increasing coordination and using our most advanced technology.

**“The Bioterrorism Protection Act, which is intended to give the ‘first responders’ on the state and local level the resources and infrastructure they need to combat the threat of bioterrorism, is an excellent example of what can happen when Congress, law enforcement, state and local governments and high tech companies work together,”** said Honda. **“By drawing on the vast resources of government, private companies and the American people BioPACT can help keep our communities and critical infrastructure safe by making sure that those on the front lines in the war against terrorism have the tools, resources and support they need to win.”**

A number of elements within the \$7 billion plan introduced today were proposed by Congressman Honda:

- **\$275 million** for developing and deploying screening hardware, software, computer infrastructure, and training to support biometric technology for law enforcement including \$10 million for Global Positioning System and wireless identification systems to monitor commercial vehicle traffic in high-risk areas, border areas and for tracking hazardous materials transit nationwide and \$15 million to create interface between private databases (SABRE, Amtrak, etc.) with national law enforcement databases immediately.
- **\$149 million** for implementing biometric scanning techniques at border checkpoints; funding and development and deployment of scanning technology capable of detecting explosive devices, biological and chemical contaminants
- **\$250 million** for developing and deploying faster scanning technologies, implementing improved mail tracking abilities to track suspicious packages to their source, and investigating procedures to treat mail and mitigate threats posed by contaminated mail.

Congressman Honda was chosen as Vice Chair of the Domestic Security Working group because of his expertise in technology issues and his strong advocacy in defense of civil liberties. Since the attacks of

September 11<sup>th</sup>. Honda has convened regular meetings with religious and community leaders from across Santa Clara County and successfully lobbied the National Football League to broadcast a message of racial and religious tolerance to a nationwide audience that has been on the air since October 8, 2001 and will continue throughout the season. Honda believes that by educating policymakers and law enforcement personnel about new technologies, such as biometric applications that verify a persons identity by retinal scan, voice or hand recognition, we can create a strong domestic law enforcement policy to secure our airports and critical infrastructure without resorting to racial profiling or subjective bias.

**“We must continue to pursue technologies that verify our identities safely, efficiently and in a manner that is as racially and ethnically neutral as possible,”** continued Honda. **“Identification applications such as biometric technology coupled with technologies such global positioning systems to track vehicles and scanners to detect explosives and biological agents can greatly help us in building a seamless security net around our airports, nuclear facilities and other critical infrastructure.”**

The BioPAct legislation introduced today is a product of the direct dialogue between Honda and his colleagues in Congress and technology companies from his Silicon Valley District and across the nation. Honda recently invited a number of Silicon Valley companies to Capitol Hill to demonstrate for lawmakers how the latest technologies can dramatically improve aviation security. Additional demonstrations are being planned for other locations across the nation. Honda has also introduced legislation that would establish a pilot program to test and evaluate new and emerging aviation security technologies, including biometrics and other advanced technologies.